

## NOAA Law Enforcement Efforts Focus on Voluntary Compliance through Education



The Honolulu-based NOAA Fisheries, Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) is responsible for enforcing federal laws protecting humpback whales and other endangered marine species throughout the U.S. Pacific Islands region.

Sometimes this enforcement takes the form of direct intervention to stop an illegal act in progress, or the issuance of a citation when marine protected species are disturbed or harmed.

On the other hand, OLE also adopts a proactive, prevention-based approach to law enforcement. For example, OLE works in conjunction with the sanctuary to provide annual, statewide "Ocean User Workshops" to recreational boaters and commercial ocean tour operators. The workshops help Hawai'i's ocean users enjoy viewing marine wildlife, such as humpback whales, while staying in full compliance with the 100-yard approach rule and other federal and state regulations related to endangered species and marine mammal protection.

During the workshops, OLE staff provides detailed information about restrictions and regulations regarding safe viewing, harassment, inadvertent contact, incident

reporting and other issues pertinent to the protection of endangered marine animals.

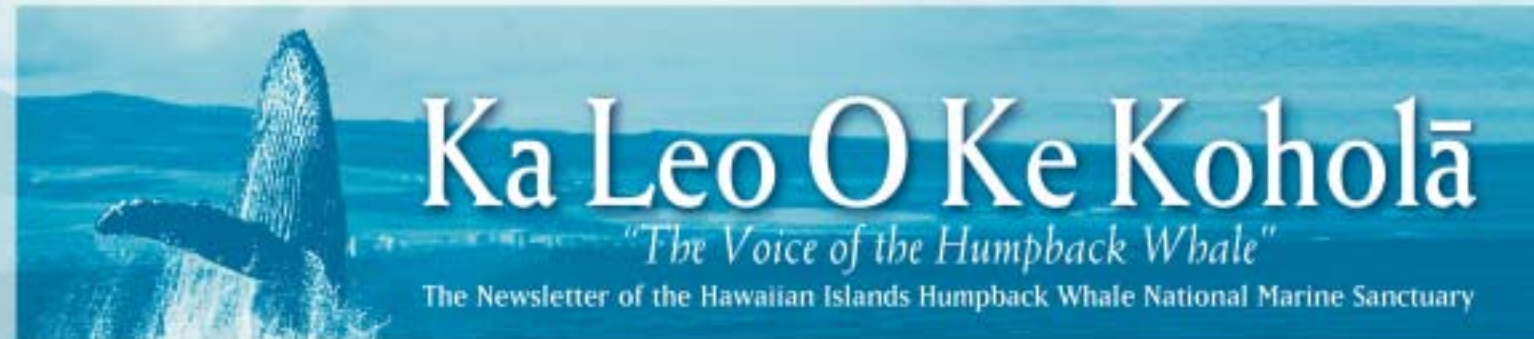
Since 1998, OLE has provided an annual "on scene" presence on Maui from January through the beginning of April, (Hawai'i's humpback whale season). During the 2002-2003 season, OLE documented 65 calls pertaining to marine resources. Of these, there were 31 Complaint Action Reports issued. Fifty one calls involved allegations of whale harassment, followed by five potential whale strandings, two whale entanglements, two sea turtle harassment complaints, one monk seal stranding, one monk seal entanglement, two dolphin harassment complaints, and one monk seal harassment complaint. In addition, uniformed enforcement officers logged in excess of 3,000 patrol miles, conducting coastal surveillance and patrol activities.

Because enforcement officers are few in number and must police such large areas, it is difficult for them to catch law-breakers "red-handed." However, because of vigilance on the part of many recreational boaters and commercial operators who understand the importance of the preservation of endangered marine animals, many incidents are now being reported, allowing officers to conduct more effective post-incident investigations. **Y**



**HAWAIIAN ISLANDS HUMPBACK WHALE  
NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY**  
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September 2003

## WHALING TO WATCHING

### Whaling to Watching project receives grant to develop web-based curriculum

The sanctuary recently learned that it has been awarded \$24,000 in mini grant catalyst funds from the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to develop web-based curriculum for the Whaling to Watching project.

The project will be a collaborative effort between the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale, Stellwagen Bank, Olympic Coast, and Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuaries, and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve. Additional partners are the New Bedford Whaling Museum, Nantucket Whaling Museum,



*The sanctuary's Whaling to Watching program highlights the evolution of human-whale interactions from whaling to eco-tourism.*

### ABOUT THE SANCTUARY

*The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was established by Congress in 1992 to protect humpback whales and their habitat in Hawai'i. To achieve this goal, the sanctuary conducts public education and scientific research in coordination with a variety of government and non-government organizations. As part of the National Marine Sanctuary System administered by the National Ocean Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the sanctuary is one of 13 areas designated as marine environments of national significance. NOAA and the State of Hawaii co-manage the sanctuary as a federal-state partnership.*



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Bishop Museum and the New Bedford Oceanarium. By demonstrating the evolution of human interaction with whales, the project aims to create greater understanding and interpretation of our long intertwined relationship with the marine environment.

In the past, both Hawai'i and New England were centers for whaling. During the 19th century, many whalers from Nantucket made the journey to Hawai'i in their hunt for whales. Today, Stellwagen Bank and the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale NMS once again are linked by these majestic animals, but this time through the growing whale watching industry. While some sort of whale watching occurs at most of the national marine sanctuaries, whale grounds at Stellwagen and Hawai'i host more than 1.2 million visitors a year.

Major themes of the interdisciplinary curriculum will include history, biology, marine science, economics, cultural heritage, music, literature, family oral history, and modern whaling concerns, and will be based on national standards easily adapted to specific state standards when appropriate.

Once the curriculum has been developed, in about a year, it will be posted on the web and made available to the public. The project will serve as a prototype for the new National Marine Sanctuary Education Web Site, now in development. The curriculum may also be used on the interactive television broadcast, Kid Science, and may be the basis for a traveling exhibit.

For more information about this project, contact Claire Cappelle at the sanctuary's Maui office at 1-800-831-4888 or email: [claire.cappelle@noaa.gov](mailto:claire.cappelle@noaa.gov). **Y**



# STAFF PROFILES

## David Matilla, Science and Rescue Coordinator



Science and Rescue Coordinator, David Mattila.

Two years ago, the sanctuary was lucky to secure the short-term contract services of David Mattila, who, at the time, had 20 years experience as the director of the humpback whale and the disentanglement programs at the Center for Coastal Studies in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Last December, the sanctuary offered Mattila a full-time position as the sanctuary’s first Science and Rescue Coordinator. Mattila accepted, moved to the Islands and jumped right into two big projects: developing a rescue program and a research program for the sanctuary.

Mattila’s background in these areas has been a critical asset in his efforts to help sanctuary partners, NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) and the Hawai’i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), respond most effectively to reports of stranded, injured and entangled whales. “Our biggest challenge is that the sanctuary is so spread out around the islands, making it much more difficult to coordinate our efforts,” said Mattila.

Nevertheless, during his first several months as the sanctuary’s rescue coordinator, Mattila provided trainings in large whale disentanglement to several staff from NOAA Fisheries and DLNR. The trainees now comprise the beginnings of a state-wide whale disentanglement rescue team, ready to respond to entangled whales under the oversight of the NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Islands Regional Office, Protected Resources Program.

Within the past year, Mattila received 12 reports of whales in distress. After assessing each report in close coordination with NOAA Fisheries, the rescue team responded to four incidents. One of the responses resulted in a very successful humpback whale disentanglement after several hours of arduous work undertaken by many individuals and agencies (as covered in the April 2003 issue of *Ka Leo O Ke Koholā*). “Not all the reports we receive require direct intervention,” Mattila said. “Sometimes when we get to a whale we see that it is not in any imminent danger, so we monitor the situation closely until we determine that the animal is stable and able to swim freely.” Mattila has been with scientists from around the Pacific Rim to establish a North Pacific-wide research project. The

goal of the project, entitled SPLASH (Structure of Populations, Levels of Abundance, and Status of Humpbacks) is to provide a detailed, comprehensive description of the humpback whale population and distribution throughout the North Pacific Ocean. (See next page for more on SPLASH).

Mattila says that besides getting to work in the beautiful waters of the Hawaiian Islands, the best part about his job are the people he works with every day. “Everyone is very dedicated and passionate about what they do, they’re a great group of people to work with.” Y

## Paul Wong, Programs Coordinator



Paul Wong, Programs Coordinator

Paul Wong, the sanctuary’s new programs coordinator, is a seasoned staff member of the National Marine Sanctuary Program. Prior to his transferring here last year, he spent 2 years with the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, which is off the California coast near San Francisco, where he served as an education specialist.

A native of Seattle, Paul received a B.S. in Biology at the University of Washington. After working for a number of years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Peace Corps, and the National Park Service (as a park ranger at Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park), he decided he wanted to return to Hawai’i.

“Working with the sanctuary offered the perfect opportunity to live in Hawai’i and help protect its natural resources,” he said.

Paul works out of the sanctuary’s O’ahu office in Hawai’i Kai and is primarily responsible for overseeing the sanctuary’s finances, contracts, and providing support program-wide. Y



The study area of SPLASH covers the entire North Pacific basin.

# SPLASH!

## What is SPLASH?

**SPLASH** (Structure of Populations, Levels of Abundance and Status of Humpbacks) is an international cooperative effort to understand the population structure of humpback whales across the North Pacific, and to assess the status, trends and potential human impacts to this population. The project has broad international and national participation.

## How will SPLASH be accomplished?

**SPLASH** will use consistent sampling efforts in feeding and wintering areas of humpbacks within the North Pacific. Field techniques such as photo-identification and biopsy tissue sampling will be the primary field methods employed.

## What are the objectives of SPLASH?

Obtain a current estimate of overall abundance of humpback whales within the North Pacific; provide an understanding of population structure and migratory interchange using genetic markers and photo-identification; estimate the abundance of specific humpback whale wintering and feeding areas to better serve management needs; provide information on trends in abundance; improve understanding of population parameters including reproductive, mortality, and pregnancy rates as well as age/sex structure; describe the influence of population processes on genetic diversity and exchange; identify habitat and characterize use; and identify human impacts (entanglement, toxicology, etc.).

## What are the regions to be studied?

Western North Pacific wintering areas, Hawaiian Islands, Mexico, Central America, California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Western Gulf of Alaska, Southeast Alaska including the East Gulf, Aleutian Islands and Bering Seas, and the Western North Pacific waters off Russia.

## When will SPLASH take place?

**SPLASH** is a three winter, two summer program effort with a proposed start time of December 2003. The SPLASH program will run through the summer of 2007.

## How can I get involved?

NOAA’s Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary looks forward to working to create education opportunities for students, teachers and the public. The **SPLASH** program offers us an amazing glimpse into the world of humpback whales of the North Pacific and the researchers who study them. We look forward to taking this journey with you!

## SPLASH Steering Committee The steering committee for SPLASH includes the following organizations:

Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NOAA; National Marine Mammal Laboratory, NOAA; National Marine Sanctuary Program, NOAA; National Park Service, Department of Interior; Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans; and Instituto Nacional de Ecologia, Mexico. Y

# SANCTUARY DATEBOOK

## WORKSHOP

Management Needs to Minimize Vessel Collisions with Whales in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and Other Marine Sanctuaries.

Date: September 3-5

Sponsor: HIHWNMS and the National Marine Sanctuary Program

Place: Wailea Marriot, an Outrigger Resort, Wailea, Maui

Contact: Naomi McIntosh, 808-397-2651 or 1 (888) 55-WHALE

A meeting of resource managers, scientists, and representatives of the maritime community to assess whale-vessel collision risks in Hawai’i and to identify possible actions to reduce their occurrence.

## SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Date: September 30

Sponsor: Sanctuary

Place: Honolulu International Airport

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Naomi McIntosh at 808-397-2651

## SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL RETREAT

Date: November 12-14 (Tentative)

Sponsor: Sanctuary

Place: TBA

Time: TBA

Contact: Naomi McIntosh at 808-397-2651

## LECTURE SERIES

Wiliwili Forest Conservation at Pu’uokali Lava Flows: A Piece of Near Pre-Contact Hawaiian Vegetation Above Kīhei, presented by Art Medeiros, Biologist, U.S. Geologic Survey

Sponsor: Sanctuary

Place: Maui Education Center

Dates: Sept. 9, Tuesday

Time: 7:00-8:00 pm (no admission charge)

Contact: Claire Cappelle at 808-879-2818

# Ka Leo O Ke Koholā

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Please visit the sanctuary web site:

<http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>